

The Fertility of Korean Minority Women in China : 1950-1985

*Among China's various ethnic groups,
the Korean minority has the lowest fertility
and mortality*

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Between the time of the second and third population censuses of China (1964-1982), the annual growth rate of the Chinese population averaged 2.1 per cent. The annual growth rate of the Han majority was 2.0 per cent; the growth rates for all other ethnic groups were higher than the national average except for the Korean minority, whose average annual growth rate was 1.5 per cent.

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China conducts numerous activities aimed at improving the health of its citizens and their quality of life. Among the various ethnic groups that comprise the population of China, the Korean minority has the lowest level of mortality.

The 1982 population census of China counted 1,766,204 ethnic Koreans in China, most of them residing in the north-eastern region of China (also known as Manchuria). The Korean minority ranks twelfth in population size among the numerous minority groups in China, and has the highest level of literacy and the highest proportion of workers engaged in occupations other than farming (State Statistical Bureau, 1985). A study of the demographic characteristics of different ethnic groups in China reports that the Korean minority has the lowest level of fertility and mortality (Dowdle, 1984).

The 1982 One-per-Thousand Population Fertility Sampling Survey of China did not include a sufficient number of Korean minority women to allow for a detailed study of them alone. Thus, the Family Planning Commission of Jilin province conducted a sample survey in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture of the Korean minority (referred to subsequently as Yanbian Koreans) to better understand the trend of fertility and the factors associated with fertility of that minority. The survey, conducted in April 1986, comprised 4,520 household interviews covering 18,404 persons. In those households, 4,350 ever-married women 15-71 years of age were asked about their fertility and family planning practices.

This article presents an analysis of the fertility, during the period 1950-1985, of Korean minority women residing in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin province, where 43 per cent of ethnic Koreans in China reside. The fertility levels and trend of this group are estimated and compared with those for women in China as a whole and in Jilin province. The timing of fertility is examined using estimated fertility rates by women's age and birth order. Fertility is also examined by women's level of education. The discussion includes a comparison of the fertility of Korean minority women in Yanbian with that for all women in China and Jilin province, as well as women in the Republic of Korea.

Fertility in China and Jilin province: 1950-1982

The rapid decline of fertility in China in recent years is well documented (Yu and Xiao, 1983; Coale, 1984; Coale and Chen, 1987; Tsuya and Choe, 1988). The annual total fertility rate of Chinese women declined from about 6.0 children per woman in 1955 to about 2.6 children in 1982. In addition to the dramatic decline, the fertility rate in China is also characterized by variations among different subpopulations. Regional variations as well as variations by socio-economic and ethnic group have been observed (China Population Information Center, 1984; Freedman *et al.*, 1986; Coale and Chen, 1987). In recent years regional variations have been exhibited not only in the fertility level but also in the pace of change. According to the estimates made from the One-per-Thousand Fertility Survey (**table 1**), the total fertility rate in the

1980-1982 period was extremely low in predominantly urban provinces (Coale and Chen, 1987). The estimates are 1.5 for Beijing, 1.4 for Tianjin and 1.1 for Shanghai. However, a number of provinces still exhibited substantially higher rates: 3.5 for Guangdong, 4.2 for Guizhou, 3.6 for Yunnan and 4.5 for Qinghai. Provinces with large proportions of ethnic minorities generally show high fertility: 3.2 for Inner Mongolia, 3.8 for Guangxi and Ningxia, and 4.0 for Xinjiang.

Table 1: Total fertility rates in provinces of China at selected times

Province	1955-1957	1968-1970	1980-1982
China as a whole	5.9	5.9	2.5
Beijing	5.8	3.6	1.5
Tianjin	7.6	3.4	1.4
Hebei	5.7	5.2	2.7
Shanxi	5.5	5.8	2.4
Inner Mongolia	6.4	6.1	2.8
Liaoning	6.8	4.7	1.9
Jilin	6.9	6.2	1.9
Heilongjiang	6.8	5.9	2.4
Shanghai	5.5	2.5	1.1
Jiangsu	5.8	4.7	1.8
Zhejiang	6.3	5.1	2.1
Anhui	5.3	6.7	2.7
Fujian	6.2	6.4	2.5
Jiangxi	5.8	7.1	3.1
Shandong	5.9	5.5	2.0
Henan	5.4	6.5	2.5
Hubei	6.3	6.5	2.3
Hunan	6.1	6.7	2.9
Guangdong	5.4	5.7	3.5
Guangxi	5.8	6.2	3.8
Sichuan	6.1	6.6	2.2
Guizhou	6.3	7.3	4.2
Yunan	6.2	6.4	3.6
Shaanxi	6.1	5.8	2.4
Gansu	6.2	6.8	2.7
Qinghai	4.4	6.3	4.5
Ningxia	7.2	6.6	4.0
Xinjiang	5.3	6.5	3.6

Source: Coale and Chen, 1987.

Jilin province is located in the north-eastern region of China. The region is characterized by a high level of urbanization, large-scale industries and rich natural resources (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1985). The total fertility rate in Jilin during the period 1980-1982 was 1.9 (table 1). Aside from the primarily urban provinces of Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai, Jilin was one of the few provinces with below replacement level fertility in 1982. However, during the period 1955-1957, Jilin had one of the highest total fertility rates in China at 6.9.

During the 12-year period from 1968-1970 to 1980-1982, Jilin province underwent the largest reduction in the total fertility rate of all the provinces in China.

The high level of fertility in Jilin in earlier years was probably due to the relatively higher socioeconomic conditions in the region. The fast reduction in the fertility rate in the ensuing years could also have been due to socioeconomic conditions, but suggests a very effective family planning programme in the province. In fact, the family planning programme in Jilin province is regarded as a model in China for its effectiveness (Asian Population and Development Association, 1986). Recent analysis of a survey of rural Jilin province documents the remarkable achievement of one-child fertility in 1984 (Tsuya and Choe, 1988).



China's family planning programme has been a national policy of the highest priority since 1962; however, fertility decline has varied among the country's subpopulations.

Korean minority in Yanbian

Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture is located in the south-eastern part of Jilin province. It borders the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the south, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the east, and Heilongjiang province to the north. Its population is 1,871,512 of which 40.3 per cent belong to the Korean minority. In 1952, the Government of China established the Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Yanbian; since then the Korean minority people have enjoyed a certain degree of regional autonomy (Wang, 1984).

Table 2 shows the distribution of the Korean minority in China by residence based on data from the population census of 1982. Ninety-eight per cent of ethnic Koreans were residing in the three north-eastern provinces of China: Jilin, Heilongjiang and Liaoning. The Korean minority population in Yanbian constitutes 42.75 per cent of all ethnic Koreans in China.

The relatively recent migration of Koreans to the Yanbian area began in the middle of the nineteenth century when the Korean peninsula was affected by a series of famines (Wang, 1984; Im, 1987). At that time, Koreans living near the border migrated seasonally to cultivate the uninhabited land across the border, the movement fluctuating with the economic and political conditions of the two countries. Many of these seasonal migrants settled permanently in China when political conditions in China and Korea made it easier to do so.

Another large-scale movement of Koreans to the Yanbian area began in 1910. Many farmers who lost claim to the land they were then cultivating in Korea moved to Manchuria, mostly to what is now Yanbian Prefecture (Han, 1970). Among the post-1910 migrants, those motivated by economic reasons outnumbered those motivated by political reasons (Im, 1987).

Table 2: Distribution of the Korean minority in China, 1982 census

Residence	Population	Korean minority	(per cent)	Percentage of entire Korean minority
China	1,003,913,927	1,765,204	(0.17)	100.00
Liaoning	35,721,694	198,252	(0.56)	11.23
Heilongjiang	32,665,512	431,644	(1.32)	24.45
Jilin	22,560,024	1,104,071	(5.89)	62.55
Yanbian	1,871,508	754,576	(40.32)	42.75

Source: State Statistical Bureau, 1985.



China uses mass rallies and other media in order to increase awareness of its family planning programme throughout the country.

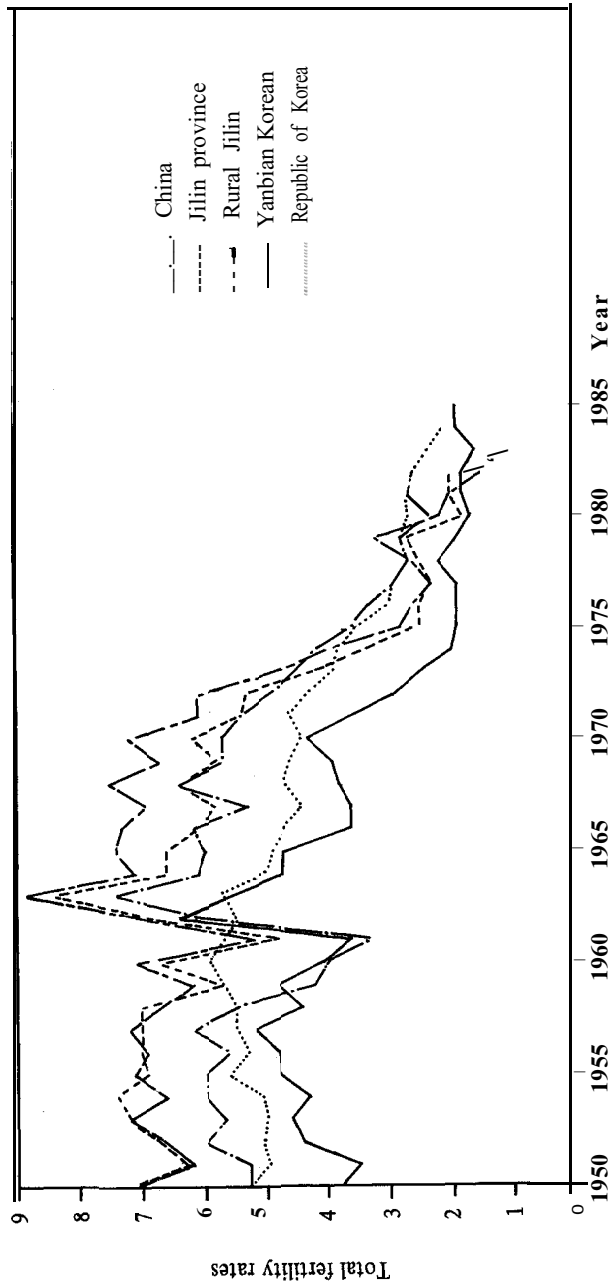
The Korean minority in Yanbian have retained their spoken and written language, and maintain Korean-language schools up through the university level (Wang, 1984; Whitaker and Shinn, 1972). The Korean community in China is also served by a number of Korean-language daily newspapers, monthly magazines and radio broadcasts (Wang, 1984).

Fertility of Yanbian Korean women, 1950-1985

Computational procedure

The fertility rates reported in this article were computed from the 1986 survey using the distribution of women by their age and the number of children they had delivered at the beginning of each 12-month period preceding the survey. The procedure estimates, for each of those periods, the age-specific and total fertility rates. The total fertility rate can be partitioned into birth-order-specific rates, which make possible the examination of fertility by birth order to determine the effect of the Government's population policy which is birth-order oriented.

Figure 1: Estimated total fertility rates of women in China as a whole, Jilin province, rural Jilin Republic of Korea, and of Yanbian Koreans: 1950-1985



Source: Table 3, Choe and Park, 1987.

Trend

The trend in total fertility rates among Yanbian Koreans is given in **table 3** and **figure 1**, together with the trend for women in China as a whole, Jilin province and rural Jilin. **Figure 1** also shows the trend in total fertility rates among women in the Republic of Korea. The table shows that the fertility rates for each group have declined dramatically since 1950. Fertility trends for the four groups share other common characteristics: a sharp reduction during the period of hardship, i.e. famine and the "Great Leap Forward" (1958-1961), followed by a rebound (1962-1963); a small reduction during the early years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1967), followed by a recovery; and a steady downward trend in the 1970s.

Some differences among the groups are also noted. The fertility rate in Jilin province was higher than the national average until about 1972, but the decline in fertility rate since 1972 has been much steeper in Jilin province than in China as a whole. The table also shows that the reduction in the fertility rate during the period of hardship was less severe in Jilin province than in China as a whole.

The fertility rate among Yanbian Koreans was substantially lower than that for women in China as a whole and Jilin province for the period 1950-1980. In fact, the total fertility rate among Yanbian Koreans was never very high. Except for the brief period after the famine of 1958-1961, the level has been around 5.0 or below. Additional differences in the fertility rate trend among Yanbian Koreans compared with the trends of women in China as a whole and Jilin may be observed. During the 1950s, the fertility rate among Yanbian Koreans showed an upward trend; the upward rebound of the birth rate after the reduction during the Cultural Revolution occurred over a more prolonged period (up to 1970) than for women in China as a whole and Jilin (up to 1968). Additionally, the rebound in fertility after the Cultural Revolution was much lower than the prevailing level before 1965. More recently, while the fertility of women in rural Jilin declined to the one-child level, the fertility of Yanbian Koreans remained at a level close to two children per woman, with little fluctuation.

It seems that the decline in fertility among Yanbian Koreans began in the 1960s, although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the decline was initiated because of fluctuations caused by the Cultural Revolution. By 1974 the fertility rate of Yanbian Koreans was below the replacement level. This trend is similar to that observed among the urban population of China, except that the Yanbian Korean level did not decline much below the total fertility rate of 2.0, while the total fertility rate in urban China continued to decline to a level just above 1.0 (Coale and Chen, 1987).

Table 3: Estimated total fertility rates of women in China as a whole, Jilin province as a whole, rural Jilin, and of Yanbian Koreans: 1950-1985

Year	All China ^{a/}	All Jilin ^{a/}	Rural Jilin ^{b/}	Yanbian Korea ^{c/}
1950	5.3	7.1	7.1	3.8
1951	5.3	6.3	6.2	3.5
1952	6.0	6.7	6.6	4.4
1953	5.7	7.2	7.2	4.6
1954	6.0	7.4	6.6	4.3
1955	6.0	6.9	7.1	4.8
1956	5.6	7.0	6.9	4.8
1957	6.2	7.0	7.2	5.2
1958	5.5	7.0	6.7	4.4
1959	4.2	5.7	6.2	4.8
1960	4.0	6.7	7.1	4.1
1961	3.3	4.8	5.2	3.6
1962	6.0	6.8	7.0	6.4
1963	7.4	8.4	8.9	5.5
1964	6.1	6.6	7.1	4.7
1965	6.0	6.6	7.4	4.7
1966	6.2	6.1	7.3	3.6
1967	5.3	5.8	6.9	3.6
1968	6.4	6.4	7.5	3.8
1969	7.5	5.8	6.7	3.9

1970	5.7	6.2	7.2	4.3
1971	5.4	5.4	6.1	3.6
1972	4.9	5.3	6.1	2.9
1973	4.5	4.2	4.8	2.5
1974	4.2	3.4	4.0	2.0
1975	3.6	2.5	2.8	1.9
1976	3.3	2.5	2.6	1.9
1977	2.9	2.3	2.3	1.9
1978	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.2
1979	2.8	2.7	3.2	1.9
1980	2.3	1.8	2.2	1.7
1981	2.7	2.0	2.0	1.8
1982	2.6	2.0	1.5	1.8
1983			1.0	1.6
1984				1.9
1985				1.9

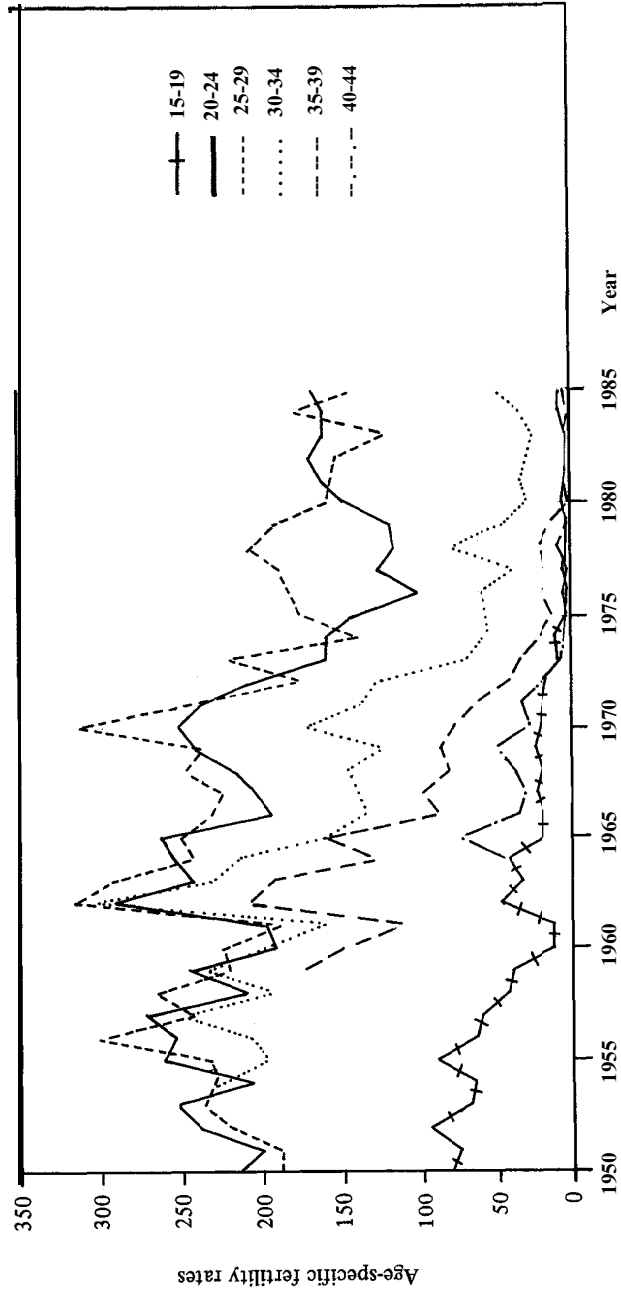
Note: Estimates for 1950-1968 TFR are based on imputed values of age-specific fertility rates at older ages.

Sources.- **a/** Rate for 12 month period centred at July 1, (Coale and Chen, 1987);

b/ Rate for 12 month period centred at July 1, (Coale and Chen, 1987 for 1950-1979; Tsuya and Choe, 1988 for 1980-1983);

c/ Rate for 12-month period centred at October 1, (Estimation from 1986 Survey).

Figure 2: Estimated age-specific fertility rates (per 1,000 women) of Yanbian Koreans: 1950-1985



Source: Table 4.

China's family planning programme was initiated in 1956 and in 1962 it became a national policy of the highest priority. The fertility decline of Yanbian Koreans seems to follow the 1962 campaign very closely, ahead of the Chinese women in general as well as those in Jilin province. The fertility decline proceeded without interruption, and in about 10 years, reached replacement level. In the Republic of Korea, where the national family planning programme was initiated in 1962, replacement level fertility was reached only in 1984 (Choe and Park, 1987; [figure 1](#)).

The most ambitious component of China's family planning programme, namely the one-child family policy, was not implemented strongly among national minorities, and this explains why the fertility of Yanbian Koreans did not fall much below replacement level.

Age pattern

The age patterns of fertility for women in China as a whole and Yanbian Koreans are shown in [table 4](#) and [figure 2](#). Figure 2 shows that, since 1965, fertility fell at all ages, but more notably at ages above 30 and below 20. The decline in fertility at ages 15-19 is probably due to the rising age at first marriage of women. The reduction in fertility at older ages is evidence of deliberate fertility control behaviour (Coale, 1986). Even during the rebound in fertility in 1968-1970 after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the birth rates for women of age 35 and over continued to decline and the rebound for the age group 30-34 was quite small.

The fertility of age groups 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 shows interesting trends. During the period 1975-1980, fertility at ages 20-24 declined while fertility at ages 25-29 and 30-34 rose. During the period 1980-1985 the pattern reverses; fertility is higher at ages 20-24 and lower at ages 25-29 and 30-34. These fluctuations in age-specific fertility can be explained by changing government policies on recommended minimum ages of marriage.

The legal minimum age for marriage was set by the marriage law of China in 1950 as 20 for men and 18 for women. Early in 1970, the Government introduced the three reproductive norms of "later (marriage), longer (spacing), fewer (children)". The norm of later marriage urged that the minimum age of marriage be 28 for men and 25 for women in urban areas, and 25 for men and 23 for women in rural areas. The effect of late marriage can be seen in the reduction of fertility at ages 20-24 and the compensating rise in fertility at ages 25-34 in the late 1970s. The next event affecting women's age at marriage was the proclamation of the new marriage law in 1980. Although the new law set higher minimum legal ages of marriage for men and women than did the 1950 law, the new minimum marriage age of 22 for men and

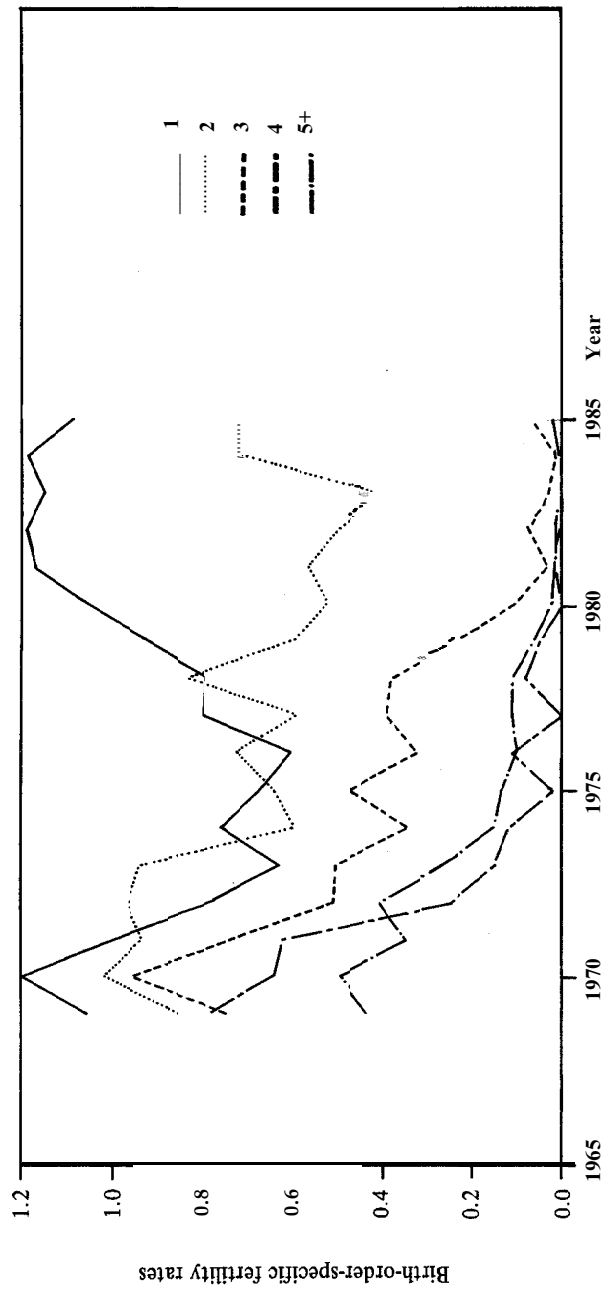
Table 4: Estimated age-specific fertility rates (per 1,000 women) of Yanbian Koreans:1950-1985

Year	Age group							TFR
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
1950	82	215	189					3795
1951	75	201	188					3509
1952	95	238	219					4351
1953	68	253	236					4588
1954	65	206	229	224				4304
1955	91	261	232	197				4768
1956	65	253	301	207				4830
1957	60	272	243	250				5191
1958	43	208	265	193				4387
1959	39	245	220	232	176			4808
1960	12	191	225	201	151			4107
1961	11	198	188	163	111			3575
1962	47	294	316	307	209			6357
1963	33	242	292	230	193			5522
1964	43	254	243	215	129	45		4673
1965	19	262	250	162	161	74		4702
1966	19	194	231	135	88	35		3590

1967	23	204	224	140	99	31	3639
1968	20	217	247	147	82	38	3816
1969	25	241	237	125	87	50	3874
1970	20	251	313	172	78	28	4310
1971	19	237	239	137	64	34	3647
1972	16	206	175	128	41	19	2925
1973	8	159	221	70	34	7	2496
1974	11	160	140	59	21	5	1972
1975	4	141	175	56	12	2	1945
1976	2	102	183	60	19	4	1869
1977	5	128	188	38	18	2	1895
1978	2	117	207	81	20	4	2199
1979	2	120	191	45	13	0	1866
1980	6	147	158	29	2	0	1713
1981	4	162	157	34	4	0	1803
1982	3	170	152	29	2	0	1782
1983	4	161	123	26	4	0	1587
1984	8	161	179	34	2	0	1920
1985	8	169	140	52	7	2	1890

Notes: TFRs are based on the single year age-specific rates. Total fertility rates for 1950-1968 are estimated by imputing missing age-specific fertility rates using the average age pattern of fertility in 1967-1971 as the model.

Figure 3: Estimated birth-order-specific total fertility rates of Yanbain Koreans: 1950- 1985



Source: Table 5.

20 for women failed to agree with the norm set in the early 1970s and seemed to condone marriage at earlier ages. This must have resulted in the rise of fertility at younger ages 20-24 after 1980, with a compensating fall in fertility at ages 25-34.

The most remarkable observation in the age pattern of fertility among Yanbian Koreans is that, since the mid-1970s their child-bearing has been limited virtually to a narrow age range between ages 20 and 29. From 1975 onward, 80 per cent or more of the births to Yanbian Korean women occurred before age 30.

Birth-order-specific rates

Table 5 and **figure 3** show the trend of total fertility rates partitioned into birth orders. For convenience, they are referred to as birth-order-specific total fertility rates. Under a stable condition of constant birth-order-specific

Table 5: Estimated birth-order-specific total fertility rates of Yanbian Koreans:1969 - 1985

Year	Birth order					TFR
	1	2	3	4	5+	
1969	1.058	0.854	0.744	0.436	0.782	3.874
1970	1.200	1.017	0.952	0.499	0.642	4.310
1971	1.003	0.936	0.734	0.348	0.626	3.647
1972	0.788	0.966	0.516	0.407	0.248	2.925
1973	0.632	0.939	0.511	0.265	0.149	2.496
1974	0.759	0.600	0.345	0.151	0.117	1.972
1975	0.674	0.648	0.472	0.132	0.019	1.945
1976	0.608	0.726	0.324	0.101	0.110	1.869
1977	0.803	0.593	0.390	0.109	0.000	1.895
1978	0.796	0.836	0.378	0.111	0.078	2.199
1979	0.917	0.603	0.234	0.062	0.050	1.866
1980	1.054	0.528	0.108	0.023	0.000	1.713
1981	1.171	0.570	0.032	0.015	0.015	1.803
1982	1.189	0.502	0.073	0.013	0.005	1.782
1983	1.149	0.407	0.031	0.000	0.000	1.587
1984	1.186	0.715	0.013	0.006	0.000	1.920
1985	1.088	0.716	0.067	0.019	0.000	1.890

fertility rates for many years, these rates would be equal to the proportion of women ever giving birth of specific orders. For example, in China, almost all women have at least one child, and if the birth-order-specific fertility rates have not been changing for many years, the first-order total fertility rate for each calendar year would be a number very close to but less than 1.0 and would not change from year to year.

When births of a given order are bunched into a short period, the birth-order-specific total fertility rate can be greater than 1.0. These rates are very sensitive to temporal changes in birth-order-specific components of fertility and therefore can be used to examine the effect of family planning policies that are specific to birth orders, as are the policies in China.

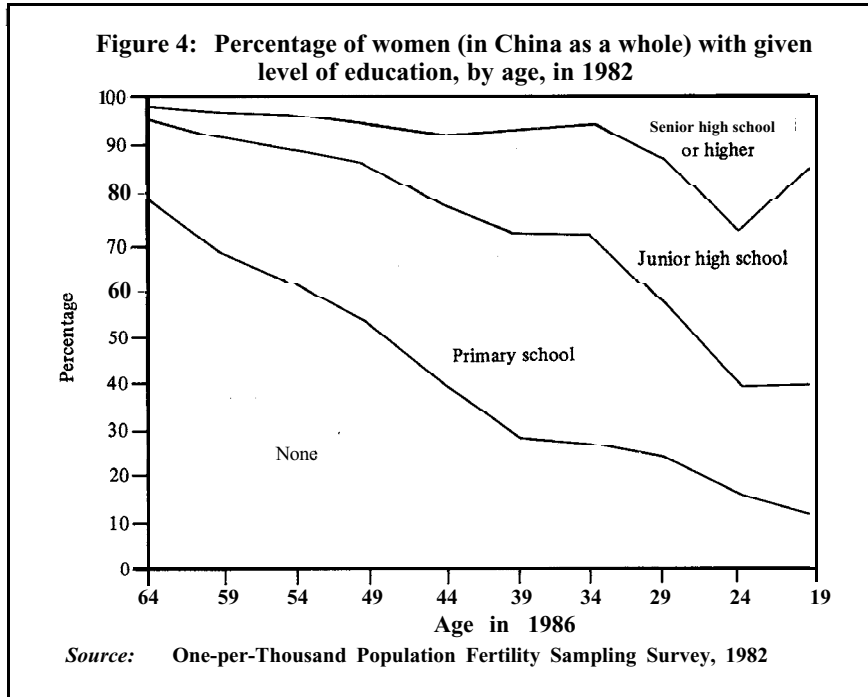
It may be observed that fertility rates of order three and higher began to decline rapidly in the early 1970s, shortly after the three reproductive norms advocating fewer births were introduced. The second-order total fertility rate shows a slight downward trend with some fluctuations, with a 1974-1985 average of 0.623. The first-order total fertility rate shows the most fluctuations, most likely due to the fluctuations in age at first marriage, with a 1974-1985 average of 0.950.

The extremely low level of the first-order total fertility rate during the period 1974-1978 and of the second-order total fertility rate during the period 1980-1983 must be due to women's response to the three reproductive norms of 1972 encouraging later marriage.

The sudden change to later age at marriage would result in a small number of new marriages, and in turn, in a low level of the first-order total fertility rate one or two years later, followed by a low level of the second-order total fertility rate a few years later. As the norm of later marriage stabilized, the first-order total fertility rate approached 1.0 in the late 1970s.

The new marriage law of 1980, which effectively condones marriage at younger ages, resulted in a bunching of marriages of young women reaching marriageable age and those women of slightly older ages who had been postponing their marriage. The effect of this bunching on fertility is revealed soon afterwards, with the first-order total fertility rate at a level substantially above 1.0 after 1981. The rate falls again to a value close to 1.0 in 1985 after the new norm of age at marriage stabilizes again.

The current birth-order-specific total fertility rates indicate that virtually all Yanbian Korean women have at least one child, a majority have two children, and few women have more than two children.



Education and fertility

Yanbian Korean women have substantially higher levels of education compared with average women in China (compare figures 4 and 5). The 1982 One-per-Thousand Fertility Survey reports that 13.4 per cent of the women aged 15-49 had education beyond the junior high school level. The comparable figure for Yanbian Korean women as determined by the 1986 fertility survey is 32.7 per cent.

It could be argued that the low level of fertility among Yanbian Koreans is due to the higher proportion of women in the group with more education who usually have a lower level of fertility (Cochrane, 1979). The One-per-Thousand Fertility Survey found a strong negative relationship between fertility and women's education. In the Republic of Korea, fertility has also been found to have a strong negative relationship with women's education (Retherford and Cho, 1981; Cho, Arnold and Kwon, 1982).

To determine whether such an argument is valid, the differential fertility of Yanbian Koreans by their level of education is examined. For this purpose,

Figure 5: Percentage of Yanbian Korean women with given level of education, by age, in 1986

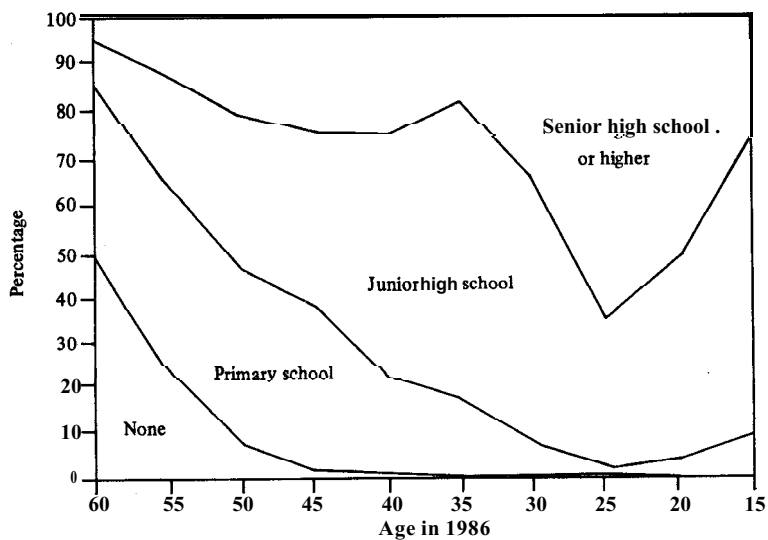
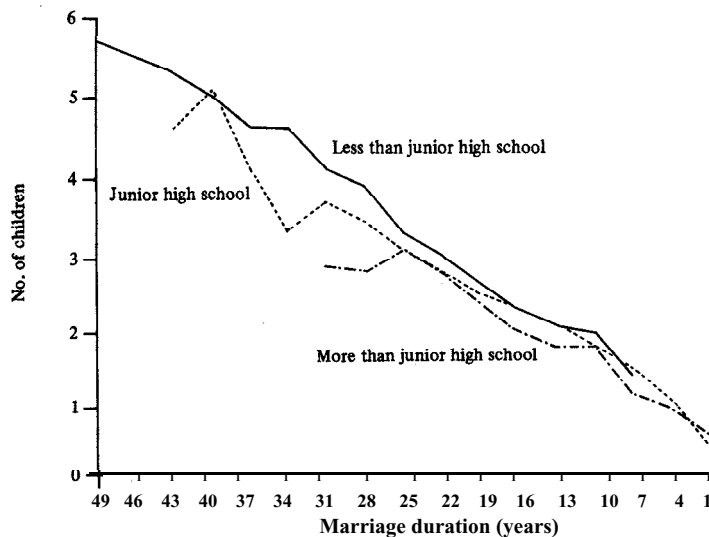


Figure 6: Average number of children ever born, by marriage duration and by women's level of education (Yanbian Koreans)



the average number of children born to women with different levels of education are compared. The average number of children born is used instead of the total fertility rate because the number of women in the survey is not large enough to allow reliable estimation of age-specific fertility rates for women with different levels of education. In addition, the study of fertility by women's education based on data from the One-per-Thousand Fertility Survey was made using the average number of children born.

Table 6 shows the average number of children born by women with different levels of education for selected ages of women. It shows relatively small differences in fertility for women with different levels of education. The differences in the average number of children are generally small, being about 0.5 children between women with some senior high school education and women with less than a junior high school level of education (see also [figure 6](#)). The differences are much larger among Chinese women at about 1.5 children (Zhao and Sun, 1984). Therefore, it may be concluded that the

Table 6: Average number of children ever born to women classified by level of education and age, Yanbian Koreans, 1986

Age of women (Years)	Women's education		
	Less than junior high school	Junior high school	Beyond junior high school
18-20	*	0.4	*
21-23	*	0.6	0.5
24-26	*	1.0	0.9
27-29	1.4	1.4	1.1
30-32	1.7	1.8	1.4
33-35	2.3	1.9	1.7
36-38	2.5	2.3	2.0
39-41	3.0	2.6	2.1
42-44	3.3	2.8	2.6
45-47	3.6	3.2	3.0
48-50	4.2	3.3	2.9
51-53	4.3	3.6	3.6
54-56	4.9	4.3	*
57-59	5.1	4.5	*
60+	5.5	5.6	*

Note: * = Number of women is fewer than 15.

average low fertility of Yanbian Koreans is not due simply to a larger proportion of women with higher education and lower fertility. All women have low fertility regardless of their level of education.

Summary and discussion

In addition to sharing the trend of fertility of Chinese women in recent years, the fertility of Yanbian Korean women during the period 1950-1985 is characterized by:

- A relatively low level of fertility, the total fertility rate rarely exceeding 5.0;
- An upward trend in the 1950s;
- Relatively small effect of hardship during the period 1958- 1960;
- Relatively prolonged effect of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s;
- Early beginning of decline starting in the 1960s;
- Fast and steady decline from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, the total fertility rate changing from 4.8 in 1965 to 1.9 in 1975;
- Replacement level or slightly lower fertility since 1975, with small fluctuations; and
- Small differentials in fertility by women's level of education.

In summary, the Yanbian Koreans began and completed the fertility transition much earlier than the rest of China. This is a remarkable achievement for a minority group in China given the less stringent government family planning programmes for minority groups. In comparison, the fertility transition in the Republic of Korea took about 20 years, reaching replacement level fertility only in 1984. In addition, substantial differences in fertility among women with different levels of education persisted in the Republic of Korea until quite recently (Cho, Arnold and Kwon, 1982).

What explanations can be given for this early and rapid decline in fertility among Yanbian Koreans? Coale (1973) summarized the preconditions for sustained decline in marital fertility to be (a) the perception of fertility as a matter of choice by potential parents; (b) the perceived advantage of reduced fertility; and (c) availability of effective techniques of fertility control.

Three factors play a major role in explaining the early and rapid fertility reduction of Yanbian Korean women. First, as members of the Korean minority group, they have characteristics different from other women in China.

They have high levels of literacy and education and thus are likely to favour the small family norm and to consider fertility a matter of choice. The migrants may also be a selected group of people who put less value on traditional norms and who are willing to accept new norms.

Second, they live in communities with a high concentration of Koreans and are served by their own language schools and mass communication systems. Once the small family norm had been accepted by some "elite" families, those factors would help to spread the new norm to the rest of the Korean women at a pace faster than that in typical Chinese communities.

Third, the family planning campaign of the Chinese Government provided a new set of norms and necessary techniques for fertility control. When the family planning campaign of 1962 was launched, the Yanbian Korean community must have been ready to accept the small family norm. When the more ambitious family planning programmes were launched in the 1970s, the Koreans who had already begun the fertility transition could complete it at a very rapid pace.

A condition usually associated with rapid fertility decline, but not found among Yanbian Koreans, is rapid economic progress. The fertility transition of Yanbian Korean women shows that rapid economic progress is not essential to a rapid decline in fertility if other conditions are favourable.

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